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Pryor OPI Team - Planning for Improvement February 8, 2011

School change is like growing a garden. The first step in quality crops is preparing the soil. The ground work takes time, but is essential in cultivating productive results.

Community Liaison News – Savannah

Sinuah: We have started conducting Parent Teacher Home Visits with families of senior students, helping us to become more acquainted with parents and find out their hope and dreams for their students. Visits have been very successful! In addition to home visits, we have been working on the Arrow Creek Greenhouse and Garden Restoration Project, Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI), Rodeo Club, senior trip plans, and increasing parent involvement. The first official Parent Involvement meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 1, at 6:00 p.m. in the PCHS Library. All who are interested in getting involved in this committee are welcomed to attend.

School Board Involvement --- Stevie

Schmitz: The Pryor School Board is working very hard to improve their processes. They commissioned the Montana School Board Association (MTSBA) to review and rewrite district policies. Board members spent an entire Saturday working on reading and revising policies. Their policy work continues on February 12 and will culminate with a first and second reading at two board meetings. Interested community members are invited to participate in the process at the working session or at the regular board meetings.

Transformation News--- David Stringfield:

Pryor's School Improvement Team meets monthly. Our next regular meeting is February 22nd. This collaborative team involving students, parents, teachers, and board members recently approved goals for a summer school program and parent involvement committee. Between monthly meetings, members are busy working on surveying student interests and communicating with students, staff and community.

Pryor District was awarded about \$40,000 for additional staff hours which may be used for summer school or after-school programs, as well as other areas we determine might be successful to improve student learning opportunities. In addition, the technology committee prioritized equipment and technology education needs, building plans on approved Improvement Grant funds of \$45,000, as well as locating technology contractors to complete some much needed work. Our meetings in Billings during January were well represented by team members and helpful to learn about upcoming support from the OPI in Helena.

Student Attendance -2nd quarter

K-6: 79% MS: 82% HS: 62%

Teacher Attendance –

September - 97% October - 95%
November and December - 90%

Early Release Professional Development – On

January 5th, our in-service prepared by the National Native Children's Trauma Center was attended by 85 percent of the teachers and all of the teacher's aide staff. Due to complications, the in-service began an hour later than planned. Presenters were able to introduce the concept of trauma-informed schools and spent time determining staff members' current level of secondary trauma to help create a climate of support for students and staff. An overall positive evaluation was reported by 97 percent of participants.

On February 3rd, we held professional development with Karma Nelson, focusing on teacher collaboration through professional learning communities (PLCs). On March 3rd, our focus will be on improving classroom discipline and the office discipline referral process. Change is happening and lasting change takes time to plant its roots.

Instructional News – Calli Rusche-Nicholson:

Summary of Work for the Month of January:

- 1 modeled lesson
- 4 program implementation checklists
- 4 administrative meetings
- 8 lesson planning coaching meetings
- High School MBI meeting
- 3 SIT meetings
- Corrective Reading advisory meetings
- Professional Development and PLC teacher collaborative planning
- Continued observations of all content areas K-12 grades

Elementary: The elementary staff has received their job-embedded professional development orientation. With that training the staff continued their MBI PLC and Language Arts PLC. The staff is still utilizing one day a week for training or collaboration. Due to roads the Everyday Math Coaches were unable to make their professional visit on January 19th, but returned to the elementary on February 1st. The staff also had their Language Arts PLC on January 28th to discuss next action steps and current implementation guidelines.

In the elementary the kindergarten teacher will be traveling to Crow Agency for a collaborative visit to observe Imagine It implementation on February 16th. We are also planning on working with the administration to develop summer school ideas to present to the SIT team.

Junior High and High School:

The language arts and math teachers received three visits from external consultants this month. On January 17th Side by Side Consulting visited all junior high and high school McDougal, Bridges, and Corrective Reading teachers to provide feedback on program implementation and differentiating instruction. During this time all Corrective Reading teachers were given a data notebook in which several forms of data are to be recorded and kept. Algebraic Thinking coach, Roy Shelton, made two visits to the school, January

7th and 14th. The math teachers have also administered both first and second quarter benchmark math assessments to the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students. This data is for informational purposes and is not used as a classroom grade.

During the upcoming month we will be collaborating with the counselor on preparing student graduation plans. These plans will be utilized during the advisory periods as well as used for fall scheduling purposes. The professional learning community will continue to meet to plan and reflect on the effectiveness of advisory periods and transitioning towards utilizing advisory periods more than one day a week.

Both schools will have professional development during the 8:00-9:00 am PLC time to improve on using a common lesson plan template that aligns to SOPPAS and “Understanding By Design.” Professional development will continue on curriculum construction using “Understanding by Design” and improving the uses of advisory periods.

From the Helena Office -- Nancy Coleman, SIG Unit Director:

District Leadership Team (DLT) – The DLT is the SIG district-formed team. This team is made up of representatives of all stakeholders in the district. Their goal is to work on school improvement initiatives and determine through local action where to put resources to work. The action plan details that are collaboratively developed at the meeting which outline the use of SIG funding should be fully supported by the administration and the board of the district.

College Goal Montana – Wednesday, February 9, and Sunday, February 13, get FREE, one-on-one help completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at any of 18 College Goal Montana locations. For more information, contact Student Assistance Foundation at 1-877-COLG4ME or visit www.CollegeGoalMT.org.

Grant Requirements for February & March:

For the board's information we are providing a listing of things that need to be accomplished at various levels. Much of the work is a continuation from the previous month.

For the On-site OPI Employees:

- Support the use of the CRT released items in classes for the state test in March;
- Continue to provide planning for the implementation of the District Action Plan (DAP);
- Continue work with SIG District Leadership Team (DLT) to establish District Action Plans details;
- Continue to assist with organizing the collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs);
- Continue to support actions steps within the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI);
- Continue to schedule external professional development providers; and
- Continue to provide job-embedded professional development through training and coaching for all staff.

For the Principal:

- Continue to attend School Improvement Team meeting(s); coordinate professional development of the PLCs;
- Begin the planning the Assessment protocols for CRT testing coming up in March;
- Continue to lead, along with the MBI facilitator, action steps within the MBI;
- Begin getting a plan in place to accommodate the 3rd party evaluator using the SOPPAS (Schools of Promise Performance Assessment System) and provide support and feedback to teachers on effective instruction;
- Begin the work with SIG DLT to establish District Action Plan details;
- Continue to monitor a system to determine 'at risk' students based on – attendance, past

class grades, discipline, support systems for success (student information system); and

- Put a plan in place that will accurately gather the required reporting data for grant compliance.

For the District/Superintendent:

- Begin the evaluation process for principals through the SOPPAS process;
- Continue to support the implementation of the DAP through resources, etc.; and
- Continue to participate in the finance calls that are provided by the OPI once a month.

For Teachers:

- Actively participate in collaborative PLCs;
- Continue to plan and implement lesson plans that include standards alignment with ongoing assessments;
- Continue to implement the programs for communication arts and mathematics with fidelity;
- Continue to actively participate in school improvement teams which you are involved with;
- Begin to use the released items for the state required test (MontCas); and
- Start the evaluation process with 3rd party evaluators.

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Statewide Youth and Community

Outreach – Don Wetzel, Jr.: This month has been very progressive in our youth and community outreach. We have begun to work with the tribal governments and tribal programs to work together on some of the issues in the schools. Funding has been a big topic and we are working with many programs trying to share resources to develop incentive programs for the youth. We have also started to speak directly to the students by engaging them to identify the solutions on attendance and grade improvement. We have some of the most talented students walking our halls and they have many of the answers we seek. Some youth want to push an

incentive-driven student lounge with snacks and games that they could buy from fundraising. They want to develop after-school programs and clubs such as rodeo, drama, and break-dancing to name a few. They are interested in making things more interesting, such as pep assemblies and open gym. There truly is nothing better than to see a student's eyes light up when they feel empowered.

Our Community Liaisons are working with them to put words into actions. We are encouraging the schools to look at a process for recognizing students, teachers and staff in appreciation for the work they are doing. Mutual respect is so important in making this all work and that is why we want to bring in Elders to speak at the schools and share their wisdom and stories. Many ideas are coming out of this with the main focus being on identity. Our Community Liaisons will be implementing the Home Visiting Project for the remainder of the year as well. This project will benefit the relationships between the school and the parents. If you are interested in what this is, visit with your Community Liaison and they can show the video of how this has worked around the country. We have started community feeds too to get better acquainted with teachers, parents, and staff. We are helping the youth get ready for college by sitting down and helping them with paperwork or even giving them a ride to take their ACT or SAT.

We appreciate the opportunities that are given to us every day with the community, staff and students and hope to continue to grow and progress in a good way to better the futures of our children and communities.

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SIG Field Consultant News -- Courtney Peterson:

- Instructional Leader communications including weekly calls and monthly meetings

- Research upcoming indicator topics such as science implementation, advisory, and summer institutes
- Coordinate program-specific professional development and external consultants
- Assist with district action planning guidance and templates
- Facilitate teaming activity at January 14 SIG meeting
- Support and assist with implementation of general SIG efforts
- Site Visit January 5 - Canceled due to illness
- Site Visit January 27

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